

HOUSE BILL REPORT

SHB 2846

As Passed House:
February 11, 2006

Title: An act relating to campaign finance disclosure.

Brief Description: Expanding campaign finance disclosure in small political subdivisions.

Sponsors: By House Committee on State Government Operations & Accountability (originally sponsored by Representatives Miloscia, Hunt, Campbell and Dunshee).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

State Government Operations & Accountability: 1/24/06, 1/30/06 [DPS].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/11/06, 95-1.

Brief Summary of Substitute Bill

- Requires that a candidate in a political subdivision exempt from disclosure laws must comply with the reporting provisions of the Public Disclosure Act if that candidate receives or expects to receive \$5,000 or more in contributions.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON STATE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS & ACCOUNTABILITY

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 9 members: Representatives Haigh, Chair; Green, Vice Chair; Nixon, Ranking Minority Member; Clements, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Hunt, McDermott, Miloscia, Schindler and Sump.

Staff: Marsha Reilly (786-7135).

Background:

In 1972, the Public Disclosure Act (PDA) was enacted following passage of Initiative 276. Among the stated purposes of the legislation were that political campaign and lobbying contributions and expenditures be fully disclosed to the public and that the private financial dealings of public officials, and candidates for those offices, present no conflict of interest between the public trust and private interest. The Public Disclosure Commission (Commission) is responsible for enforcement of the PDA.

Two reporting provisions are included in the PDA to address those concerns. One provision requires that all political campaign and lobbying contributions and expenditures be fully disclosed. The law applies to all election campaigns with the following exceptions:

precinct committee office; federal elective office; and office in a political subdivision of the state that does not encompass a whole county and that contains fewer than 5,000 registered voters as of the date of the most recent election.

The other reporting provision requires that all public officials and candidates for public office submit a statement of personal financial affairs. Exceptions for filing this report include:

precinct committee office; federal elective office; and candidates, elected officials and agencies in political subdivisions with less than 1,000 registered voters.

Any exempted political subdivision may petition for disclosure of contributions and expenditures and/or personal financial statements. In order to be validated, the petition must include signatures of at least 15 percent of the registered voters as of the date of the most recent general election in the political subdivision and be submitted to the Commission. Signatures are verified by the county auditor or elections officer of the county in which the political subdivision is located. Once the correct number of required signatures is verified, the Commission is required to notify every known affected person to file the required statements and reports within 14 days of the date of the order.

If the petition is for reporting of political campaign contributions and expenditures, it must be filed at least 60 days before the election at which a ballot measure is considered or at least 60 days before the first day of the filing period for candidates running in the election for which disclosure is to be required.

Summary of Substitute Bill:

The reporting provisions of the Public Disclosure Act apply to a candidate in any political subdivision if the candidate receives or expects to receive \$5,000 or more in contributions.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Effective Date: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: The purpose is to bring a little more scrutiny to candidates in small jurisdictions who spend a significant amount of money.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: (In support) Representative Miloscia, prime sponsor.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.